

Interview with Nette Morrison Thomson on November 9, 1991, by John Byl.

Nette Thomson calling from Oliver B.C. My number is 604-498-2445. Your project is the most fascinating thing I have heard of and I will pay the long distance charges.

This letter about MES really got me going. You know Miss Mary Barker.... She just had a cataract operation, I was just talking to her the day before yesterday, and she is 86 and she knows everybody. She graduated from MES in 25 and then she was one of the starting women in the women's army.... she does not blow her own horn, she has kept in touch with thousands of people, from coast to coast. There is a lady in Victoria who was in the same class and she is still there. Anyhow, I just spent the last 24 hours remembering things of MES. If there is anything I could do to help you I would be glad to, but Mary Barker is the source of most information, and she is very alert -- just got home from a convention in Toronto. She gets around a lot, she knows everybody, and I do not know too many other latter students. The lady in Victoria is around the same class as Mary. Her name was Marjorie Culbert [Royall]. When I lived in London she was my babysitter, then I was out of touch with her during the war years, when Mary came with Doris Weston -- have you got her -- she was 34 or 35. Mary Barker was in charge of Physical Education at Western University, Doris was second in command and I was number three. [Doris Weston Cameron '33 grad]. They are up Thunder Bay area. Then there is Norah Gauld ['34] who lives in Toronto. She is very alive and alert. She went to Western from MES, and then to OCE, and then she taught here and there ever since. Last year she won teacher of the year award in Toronto. She only turned 80. She lives at 8 Ashton Manor. And she knows a lot of people. Like Betty Gilchrist is still around. She was ['35]. Murial Sinclair is '36. She taught at Alma College when she come out of MES. She is a very nice person. Elle Sovereign died, seven or so years ago. She was Bishop Sovereign's daughter and came from Athabasca down to MES and was in the class of '36. We thought she died kind of young.

MES was taken over by the university in the war time. The year I started there was the first year that Miss Somers was in charge of the school. Miss Hamilton owned Camp Tanamakoon where we went to camp for September. It was the first year Miss Somers came when I started. I was looking through my memory book and there was a snapshot of her, standing with her cane -- she came from a school in Boston. We had a little mimeographed thing but not a formal yearbook. It was little maybe 20 or 30 pages. The later years were getting more sophisticated.

The physical ed girls from the university used to come down to our school to do some of the practical work and we went there. We didn't get along too well. They didn't like us and we didn't



like them. That was the first year it was integrated. They thought we didn't know anything and we thought they didn't know anything. They had a lot more theory and we had a lot more practise. Several girls from our class stayed over at Willard Hall, back to back to our school at Yonge. Before it was MES it was a YMCA. There was also a theatre attached to it, if you sneaked through the backway you get to backstage from behind the swimming pool. Obviously I explored and enjoyed the whole thing and spent all day yesterday just day dreaming. I haven't kept in contact with too many people, being out here and far from Toronto....

We live one mile north of Oliver on the highway and we are the original registered organic gardeners in Canada. This is quite a change. But because I have been in phys ed all my life, then you can walk up all over, up and down, all the time without getting tired. We began in 1951. Harrowsmith had an article on us in 1979, issue 76. It has some pictures and stuff and Jennifer Bennett and I were talking on the phone about like you and I are now. My husband died a couple of months ago now. But we are working as hard in gardening as I used to physical ed. They sort of tie together.... I just grow the stuff but I am not a very good cook.

It is nice talking to you and there are some people who are alert enough to have their own memories. I will return the form, except there is not enough space. I will do it neatly. My address is Box 1177.... Eleanor Keyes, oh yes she had a beautiful grey winter coat.... The ones in my class were Brigden, Dunning, Edmunds, Fiebig, Glenwright, Hammill, Logie, Lowe, Lowman, McArel, Morrison, Proctor, Sinclair, Steenman, Sovereign. [What happened to Hurd, Keyes, Smith, and why Edmunds and Fiebig from the following year???] Those are the girls from the class. Can you imagine that after all these years.

Bye.



Name (as student) Netta Margaret Morrison Graduation year 19 36

Today's date: Nov 8- 1991

I. Why did you choose to study at MES?

My family wanted to get me away from London - so  
Nora (Grand) Winton came for a weekend visit &  
they all decided I should go to MES.

II. What alternatives did you consider?

I wanted to go to Westminster Business School in  
London & then work in the shipping dept. of my Dad's  
Shipping factory. No way!

III. What are some of your fondest memories of being a student at MES?

Everything! lots of activity, wonderful teachers,  
lovely residence. - first 119 St George St. Then 2  
blocks north on St. George.  
Apt. each year at camp. '44 Tanamakoon '45 O.A.C. near  
Phillia

IV. What are some of your worst memories of being a student at MES?

none

V. With respect to your course work what are some of your fondest memories?

Anatomy at U.O.T.  
Hygiene Theory in the sun porch at 119 after skating  
3 hrs at Parcette Stadium.



VI. With respect to your course work what are some of your worst memories?

VII. What do you remember about the school's principal and board?

Miss Hamilton, owner of Tanamakoon, retired 1935. She was the start of it all.  
Miss Florence Boners - from N. of Boston P.E. - erect, knowledgeable, kind →  
Dorothy Jackson - a fine example in all ways. → OVER

VIII. How do you think most student's paid for their education at MES [summer jobs, parents paid....]?

Parents paid school fees + residence fees. + sent suitable monthly allowance for lacrosse, hockey, sticks figure skates<sup>etc.</sup>

IX. In what ways have you kept in touch with alumnae of MES?

In touch only with Mary Barker, Nora Gould Wistow and recently with Mary (Culbert) Royal; Doris (Weston) Cameron came once with Mary.

X. What kind of work/volunteer activities did you do as a result of your education at MES?

Taught dancing - Oliver, Osipow & Orouille Wash 1947-1956  
" " for School Operettas, plays 1955-1975

XI. Did you pursue further education following MES? Where? Why?

London Normal School 45, 46, for Ont. Elementary certificate  
Victoria Summer School 1956; for transfer to B.C. "  
1956-57 Sat. at Penticton to complete B.C. certificate  
Taught B.C. Home Ec. "Clothing Textiles" 1955-1975



lived in residence.

Miss Wardley - great out doors person; friendly + strict when necessary.

Miss Charlotte Layton - school office manager since beginning

- knew everything

- " everybody - and for years later.

- capable; understanding; mediator in any upset



XII. PERSONAL BACKGROUND:

- A. Your year of birth: 19 46  
B. Your country of birth: Canada  
C. Country of mother's birth: Canada  
D. Country of father's birth: Canada  
E. When you entered MES what occupations did your parents have?

Mother's occupation: Lady of her house

Father's occupation: Hosiery factory owner

- F. Where were you living before coming to MES?

City: London, Ontario

Province: ✓ Country: Canada

- G. Which school did you attend prior to entering MES?

Victoria Public; London South Collegiate; London Central

What grade (level) did you complete at this school? 13

Was this a private or public school? public

- H. If you married, which year did you first do so: 19 37

Married to: (name) Wm. Kennedy

Occupation of husband when married: groundsman on rural power line; Woodstock

- XIII. Would you be interested in receiving a copy of my abstract when I complete my study? YES!

Could you list other addresses than from the class of 39, and 41, or do you know of MES students who have passed on?

Mrs Mary Barker, High ma Mara, Ingonish P.Q. '24 Box 1K0

Nora (Gault) Wistow '35 - 8411 Manor, Toronto, M84 2N5

Marjorie (Culbert) Royal '24 - 548 Dallas Apt, #815 Victoria V8V 1B3

{ Margaret Eaton, Toronto '24? - elevator accident a few years ago.  
Ellie Sovereign '36 -



P.S. Called Mary (Culbert) Royal to-day + we had a  
nice long chat. She had "babysat" me when I was 2.



Golden Boulders  
Junge & St Clair



Name Muriel Sinclair Osburn Graduation year 1936  
604-537-5026  
Today's date: August 16 1991

I. Why did you choose to study at MES?

Because I was keen on athletics when I went to Branksome Hall. And I just liked sports. Also, I wanted to go into nursing but was too young at the time, now I am far too old. I lived in Toronto and I think it was the only Phys Ed school at that time.

II. What alternatives did you consider?

III. What are some of your fondest memories of being a student at MES?

Very nice class mates. Enjoying what we were doing.... I was not in residence. I found out that being in residence in nursing that lasting friendships are made and living in residence you really experience that closeness of fellow students that you don't have as day pupils.

IV. What are some of your worst memories of being a student at MES?

None whatever. It was a delightful two year course. Lots of action, and good friends. I believe it is part of Toronto University now.

V. With respect to your course work what are some of your fondest memories?

Several of the instructors I knew from Camp Tanamakoon. They were counsellors there. When we went to Camp Tanamakoon in September that was part of the course. I worked there after MES. I went to camp for 13 years as a camper as a young kid and eventually as a counsellor. There are some girls that meet the first Monday of every month in Toronto over lunch as ex-Tanamakoon people. If there was ever any strong bond of feeling for an organization it was Camp Tanamakoon summer camps. About 15 to 20 of them. You could speak to my sister, (Mrs. Charles W. Powell, 30 Brandon Road. Her name is Oweneth Sinclair. She would be a good one to talk to. It is really amazing. They all enjoy each other's company and really have a strong feeling for camp.... I went to camp for a number of years for just a month. Later for two months. As a counsellor for two months. I guess you got paid something - you got room and board and a little extra. About the women that meet for lunch - they went to the same restaurant at Yonge and St. Clair and they were asked to find another place because they were singing old camp songs - they were too rowdy for the lunch crowd. They were all oldies and they keep in touch.

Golden Boulders  
MES Camp  
Junge & St Clair  
12:00

425-  
2341



Dorothy Jackson, I can see her in my mind's eye. She was a very active person. She was very exact - you did things right or you didn't do them - in gymnastics. She was also a counsellor at Camp Tanamakoon. She might have been in residence.

VI. With respect to your course work what are some of your worst memories?

VII. What do you remember about the school's principal and board?

[Somers] She always wanted us to sit up straight. She had a funny little expression she used to have. She'd say "Sit in your pants." I am not sure what that meant. Maybe not sitting on our back.

VIII. How do you think most student's paid for their education at MES [summer jobs, parents paid....]?

Parents.

IX. In what ways have you kept in touch with alumnae of MES?

Well I talked with my sister in law, and am still in touch periodically with one or two that were in our class. Baabs is a year a head of me. Joyce Jarvis was a senior when I was a Junior, she was a cousin of mine.

Elizabeth Jarvis Johnston [F.W.]  
92 Cheritan Ave  
Toronto, Ontario

489-1462

1937. She would be a good one to talk to. She is a great talker and very knowledgeable.... It has been a long time.

I know Leona Seagram Clarke is deceased, and my sister in law Baabs Osburn. She was married, but definitely was related to the Seagrams people [Seagrams distilleries]. She was also a gold medallist in her year.

X. What kind of work/volunteer activities did you do as a result of your education at MES?

Anyway, it was a two year course, and then I taught at Al Macoters and St. Alberts in Brantford [this was not clear on tape] and then I went in training. I ended up as an RN...

XI. Did you pursue further education following MES? Where? Why?

See X.



XII. PERSONAL BACKGROUND:

- A. Your year of birth: 19 16
- B. Your country of birth: Canada Toronto
- C. Country of mother's birth: Canada
- D. Country of father's birth: Canada
- E. When you entered MES what occupations did your parents have?

Mother's occupation: died when I was born and she went to Havergal College but did not have any job

Father's occupation: construction company - president but things did not go well after crash

- F. Where were you living before coming to MES?

City: Toronto

Province: ontario Country: canada

- G. Which school did you attend prior to entering MES?

Branksome Hall

What grade (level) did you complete at this school? 13

Was this a private or public school? private

- H. If you married, which year did you first do so: 19 47  
In the meantime I went overseas as a nurse

Married to: (name) W.F. Osburn

Occupation of husband when married: in the army - we met in Germany - came back and worked for Canada Permanent Trust for 30 some years.

- XIII. Would you be interested in receiving a copy of my abstract when I complete my study? I would be very happy to





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